

I HAVE A DREAM

Martin Luther King, Jr. is considered by many to be one of the most influential men in recent history. He achieved this status through his insistence that nonviolent means should be used to achieve racial and economic justice. King changed America, and the world, forever with his "I Have a Dream" speech delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. He also influenced the struggle for freedom in South Africa, his work serving as an inspiration for Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Lutuli, who fought for racial justice in his country.

After reading his historic speech and the attached worksheet on Martin Luther King, Jr., think of a dream for your community, your country or the world and write an essay longer than 1,500 words describing your dream and **what you can do to achieve it.**



Black History Month Essay Competition Entry Form

Participant Name

DATE

Grade / Age

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE ()

SCHOOL

TEACHER'S NAME

Entries may also be dropped off at:
 - U.S. Consulate General Library - Soweto
 - U.S. Consulate General Reading Room - Mamelodi
 - U.S. Consulate General Library - Cape Town and Durban
 - U.S. Consulate General Information Resource Centers
 - U.S. Consulate General Library - Cape Town Central Library
 - U.S. Consulate General Library - Johannesburg American Corners

* These libraries are at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria and the U.S. Consulates General in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. For more information, visit <http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/lrc.html>

To research your topic, visit one of the libraries mentioned above, or your school - or public library.





I too Have a Dream.

Martin Luther King Junior changed America and has greatly influenced the world when it came to liberating people and bringing about racial and economic justice. He had a dream for America and that dream turned out to be a powerful message for the rest of the world.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on the 15 January 1929 in the capital city of Georgia, Atlanta. He was a smart and willing student and entered Morehouse College at the tender age of only 15. Besides Jesus, King was influenced mostly by Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Howard Thurman, Hosea Williams, Benjamin Mays, Leo Tolstoy, Henry David Thoreau and Bayard Rustin. King died on the 4 April 1968 at the early age of 39. He is remembered as a heroic leader in the history of modern American liberalism and as an iconic figure in the development of civil rights.

Like Martin Luther King, Jr., I too have a dream. A recurring dream that comes back to me every night and that is not forgotten in the morning, and tends to linger throughout the day. A dream inspired by King's speech delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, a dream to better my community, my country, and eventually the world.

In my community, and most of the country, you find that people are still immature. They act as a child who has been restricted in everything he does. Once those boundaries and restrictions are removed this child acts out and wants to do everything he has missed out on, because he was never allowed to. In a sense we are like that child and act in that way. We have all this freedom and don't know how to handle it or use it.

South Africa is a developing country that has recently been liberated from the rule of an oppressor. Freedom was just a concept with no actual meaning, just a word, just a myth among the oppressed to keep us hopeful. When coming out of Apartheid nobody was told how to be free. This has resulted in chaos and confusion. In my dream this is all different. In my dream our nation rises up above its circumstances and in doing so inspires the world to do the same.

In my dream we get over the struggle and hardships of the past, and concentrate on moving forward into a prosperous future. In my dream we are no longer "previously disadvantaged". In reality if we continue to say that, then that is all we'll ever be. Times have changed and we are now advantaged and we have all the opportunities we previously didn't. Our thoughts are seeds planted in the earth that determines what fruits will grow, and whether they'll be sweet and rich, or sour and bitter. We need to get people out of their "self-pity" way of thinking and into a more positive way of thinking. In my dream we are a nation of people that say "I can", "I am" and "I will".

In my dream there is no need for war, riots or protests. We have found another way to deal with our problems and disagreements. We can speak openly about our concerns and openly make suggestions. We have a voice that is not only heard but also listened to. More importantly we listen to others as well. One voice alone might be hard to hear among many others but a choir of voices will definitely be heard. In my dream we work together with our neighbours, supporting one another and lending out a hand when it is needed.

In my dream the people and the laws that govern us are fair and honest. In this land of hope we have a Government that is for the people and is not corrupted by their greed for wealth

and power. In reality we can not rely on our Government because the Government is stealing from its people, the Black are stealing from the Black. They spin webs of lies and get so caught up in it that they end up living a lie. In my dream we learn the value of honesty at home, at school and in our community and then we teach this skill to our children, neighbours, and even to that stranger on the corner.

In my dream people see each other for who they are and do not stereotype according to their race. We went through the struggle of Apartheid yet we still judge each other by the colour of skin and not by character. We walk next to our white brother but pull our face in disgust. We look at anyone different, race or culture, and treat them differently. If you see somebody as part of a race, then see them as part of the human race. Some people are angry about the injustices of the past and act out on that anger. That is not the way to move on or make any positive changes for our future. In my dream we teach our children, and they teach their children, that it's not what you are but rather who you are that matters. This way we ensure that future generations will see true potential in one another.

In my dream we are allowed to be ourselves. We express our individuality with pride and celebrate our differences. There is no conformity and cliques. There is no status quo. Our ego's do not make our decisions for us but simply help guide us. We do not laugh at others as they fall but rather help them get back onto their feet. We help each other grow on a spiritual level no matter what our belief systems are. We don't tease others about what they don't have but rather give what we can.

In my dream we are all truly free. What is freedom? Freedom is the power to act, think and speak without external restraints (Google.co.za). In my community and throughout South Africa black, coloured and Indian people are ecstatic about being free and are trying to exercise this freedom. They are attempting to exercise the forty-six years of forbidden freedom into the years that they have left to live. The problem is that they are doing this at the cost of other peoples comfort and freedom. We think that freedom means doing whatever you like to whoever you like at whatever cost. We forget that freedom does come with its consequences and responsibilities. In my dream we understand what freedom really is and are taught this as early as childhood.

In my dream everyone is honestly equal. We all have the same opportunities, the same facilities and care, and we all have access to these facilities. We are the same in the eyes of the law even the people controlling the law. Money and wealth don't determine your status because there is no status. No classes exist in this dream, only me and you as individuals. We are equal.

There are terrible things that happened in the past and I believe that we need to learn from those mistakes and errors and grow from them. We need to move on as individuals and as a nation. I feel that the best way to do this is to teach our children what they need to know in order to help them grow. Do not tell them of how much you suffered during the oppression (we don't want to make them angry), but tell them of all you hope for and fuel their ambition. Teach the children to forgive and forget, to be honest yet diplomatic, and to be true to who you are.

This dream of mine feels almost real and I know that it is a possibility to reach that place. If Martin Luther King, Jr., one man, can make such an impact on the world, then I know I can

too. I start by making the necessary changes in myself and inspiring my friends around me to do the same. Those friends will spread the change to their friends and family. Eventually my dream is shared with others so that at the end of the day we share a common dream and goal. As a community and then as a nation we can make this more than a dream. We can make this a reality.

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